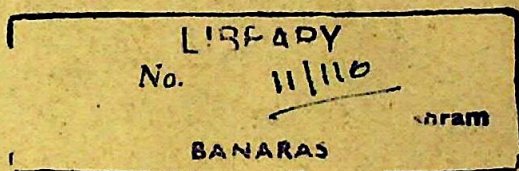


THE MEMOIRS OF PRATIBHAMAYEE DEBI

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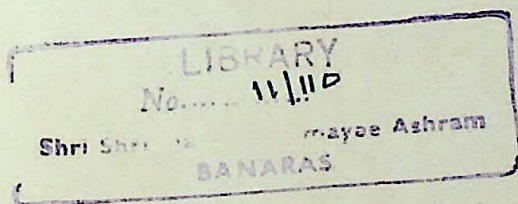
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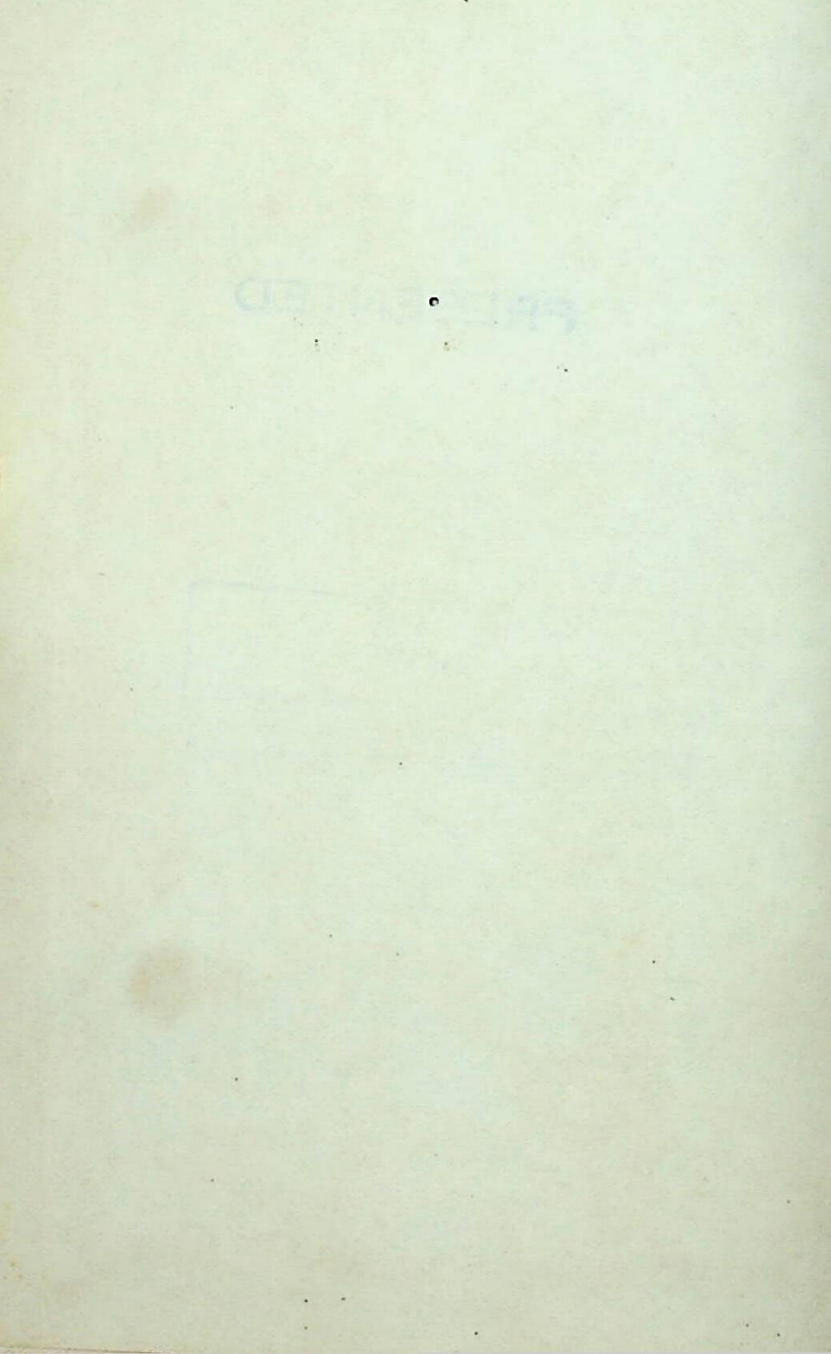
By

TAPODHEER KRISHNA RAI DASTIDAR

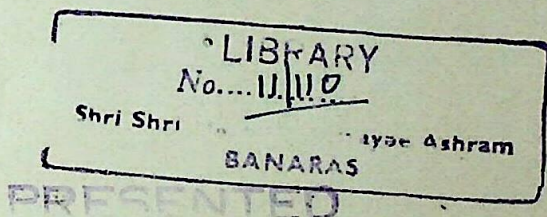


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THE MEMOIRS OF PRATIBHAMAYEE DEVI



*Translated from
the original Bengali manuscript
by*

TAPODHEER KRISHNA RAI DASTIDAR M.A., LL B.

Published by :

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

My mother-in-law, the late Pratibhamayee Debi, had during her life-time expressed a desire that her *Atma-Jivani* (hereinafter referred to as the *Memoirs*) as recorded by her in the Bengali language should be printed and published in book-form at some convenient period of time after her demise. It was her further desire that an English translation of her said *Memoirs* should also be made by me, or caused to be made by some competent person selected by me, and that the English rendering of the *Memoirs* so made should also be printed and published in book form. The task of publishing her said *Memoirs* was entrusted by her to my wife, Sn. Sujata Rai Dastidar. My mother-in-law's instructions in this behalf are contained in a letter addressed by her a few years before her death to my wife. The said letter which was in a closed cover, and the original manuscript of her *Memoirs* written in an exercise book which was securely done up into a packet, were directed to be opened after her death.

The following is a free translation of relevant extracts from the said letter :

My dear Sujata,

I do not know after how many days I may meet you again. I am therefore putting down in writing all that I want to tell you,—because I am not sure if I shall have the power to write hereafter. Owing to old age and rheumatic troubles, I am gradually becoming infirm. On the last occasion when you came to this house, I narrated to you practically all the incidents connected with that phase of my life which has been devoted to religious practices and discipline. I am now putting down in writing such of my spiritual experiences that remains to be told.

The events connected with that phase of my life which has been devoted to spiritual practices have been put down in writing in a *Khata* (Exercise book). When you consider the time opportune, you will please take the *khata* to Calcutta and cause it to be printed in book-form. I am narrating the said events in this exercise book in order to propagate the unbounded Glory of the Supreme Godhead before the world. It is on you that I consider it fit to entrust this responsibility.

I have not narrated in this account any incident of my life other than such incidents as are characterised by Divine Grace. It is merely an account of such incidents which are absolutely true together with an account of my heartfelt and genuine devotion to the lotus Feet of the Supreme Godhead which have been narrated in writing in my own language out of an emotional urge.....

Further, practically nobody other than a Bengalee is acquainted with the Bengali language. You would therefore please request Tapodheer that he should translate the book into English himself or have it translated with the assistance of some competent person, and cause to be printed a few copies of the English rendering also, and further, that he should send a few copies of both the editions of the book (Bengali and English) to Sudhin and Manish.....

This may possibly be my my last letter to you.

Blessings from

Your mother."

My mother-in-law passed away peacefully on November 8th, 1973 at the age of 90.

As would appear from her said letter, her object in recording her *Memoirs* in a book-form was to propagate the unbounded Glory of the Supreme Godhead before the world.

Her *Memoirs*, as stated in her aforesaid letter, record mainly the principal incidents connected with that phase of her life which was characterised by spiritual practices and contemplation of the Divine. Quiet and unassuming in her disposition and manners all throughout her life, she has not given any hint in her *Memoirs* of the numerous facets of her life which marked her out as a lady of remarkable talents. She had a prodigious memory. Although she did not receive any so-called higher education, it is surprising that she was well-read in diverse subjects, and that she had mainly by her own efforts gained sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable her to read and follow not only daily newspapers published in the English language, but also books written in English. It is no less surprising that in the midst of all her household duties which she carried out flawlessly, she could find time to remember God and to take His Name. One reads with bated breath an account of the gradual unfoldment and development of her spiritual life as narrated by her. Born in a *Sakta* family and also married in a family following the *Sakta* cult or faith, it is interesting that she should have been subsequently drawn towards the lotus Feet of Lord Govinda and came to regard His Name as her *Ista-Mantra*.

As regards her spiritual or Supra-mundane visions as recorded by her in her *Memoirs*, this is not the place to enter into a discussion of the view-points of the atheists, the agnostics and the believers in the Supreme Godhead, nor into the view-points expressed by the different schools of Hindu Philosophy, nor into the respective view-points of the Impersonalists and of the believers in the Transcendental Personality of the Supreme Godhead, nor into the view-points of the *Kevaladwaita*-

Vadins and of the *Caitanyites*. But a few words may be necessary in answer to the doubts of those sceptics who, while believing in the existence of the Supreme Godhead, may say that we are often deceived by our senses, and that the said visions might have been just hallucinations.

The Supreme Godhead has been referred to in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* as *Adokshaja* ; that is to say, the Supreme Godhead is beyond the range of any mundane sense-experience, and He cannot be known or reached by the application of physical senses or the exercise of our mental faculties. The Supreme Godhead is not a created being, and He does not possess any material Form or Body of flesh and blood like a human being. The Supreme Godhead may, however, out of His inconceivable Prerogative and out of Compassion to His bonafide servitor who has taken absolute refuge in Him, be graciously pleased to reveal His Supra-mundane Form even in this phenomenal world to such servitor. In this connection, it may not be out of place to reproduce the following lines from the *Katha-Upanishad* :

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो-

न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-

स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥

While the Supreme Godhead or the Infinite Self is not to be attained by deep study of the Vedas, nor by intellectual power, nor by listening to the various scriptures, it is only such persons (i. e., bonafide servitors) whom He chooses out of His infinite Compassion that are eligible to win Him, and it is only such persons to whom He reveals His real Form.

(*Katha.* 1/2/23)

Further, the following incident of my mother-in-law's life may not be entirely irrelevant in this connection. On one occasion, during her life-time, she got a chance to meet the renowned *Sannyasi* Swami Bholananda Giri Maharaj and to relate to him all about her spiritual experiences and visions. She then sought his advice as to whether in the circumstances she should be required to receive formal initiation (*Diksha*) from a *Guru* (spiritual preceptor). Swamiji was then pleased to tell her that so far as she is concerned, it was not necessary for her to receive any formal initiation from any *Guru*. It is hardly conceivable that such an enlightened soul as Swami Bholananda Giri Maharaj would have so advised her if he were not convinced that she had in fact received the Supreme Lord's Blessings and that she had not been deceived by her senses when she had the spiritual experiences related by her and later recorded by her in her *Memoirs*.

I regret that a long period of illness should have incapacitated me from taking up earlier the work of translation which my mother-in-law had desired me to undertake. I am to add that I have all through felt that it is extremely difficult to convey into another language the exact spirit and sense of the original manuscript written in Bengali and I crave the readers' indulgence and forgiveness for all my lapses in this regard.

3, Satyen Dutta Road,
Calcutta-700029.
October 30th, 1974.

T. K. R. D.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The *rai-son d'être* for the publication of the English translation of my mother's *Atma Jivani* will appear from the *Translator's Note* printed towards the commencement hereof. I regret that through inadvertence, I omitted to make any mention of my mother's letter referred to in the *Translator's Note* in my Preface (*Matri-Smarane*) to the *Atma-Jivani*.

Kind attention of the readers is invited to my said Preface to the Bengali publication *Atma-Jivani* for some idea of the "numerous facets" of my mother's life referred to in the *Translator's Note*.

It is regretted that owing to unavoidable circumstances, the English rendering of the *Atma-Jivani* could not be printed and published earlier.

As in the case of the Bengali publication *Atma-Jivani*, so also in the case of the English version thereof, I have to acknowledge the great assistance rendered to me by Sreeman Nirmal Kanti Dasgupta in seeing the *Memoirs* through the Press. May the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna shower His Blessings upon him ! Thanks are also due in no small measure to Messrs M. B. S. Printers for their promptness in completing the press-work.

Calcutta-700029

January 6, 1975

Sujata Rai Dastidar

ATMA-JIVANI
MY MEMOIRS
OR
A SHORT ACCOUNT OF MY LIFE AND
EXPERIENCES

SM. PRATIBHAMAYEE DEVI
—Born Baisakh 14, 1290 B. S.—
(Corresponding to April 26. 1883)



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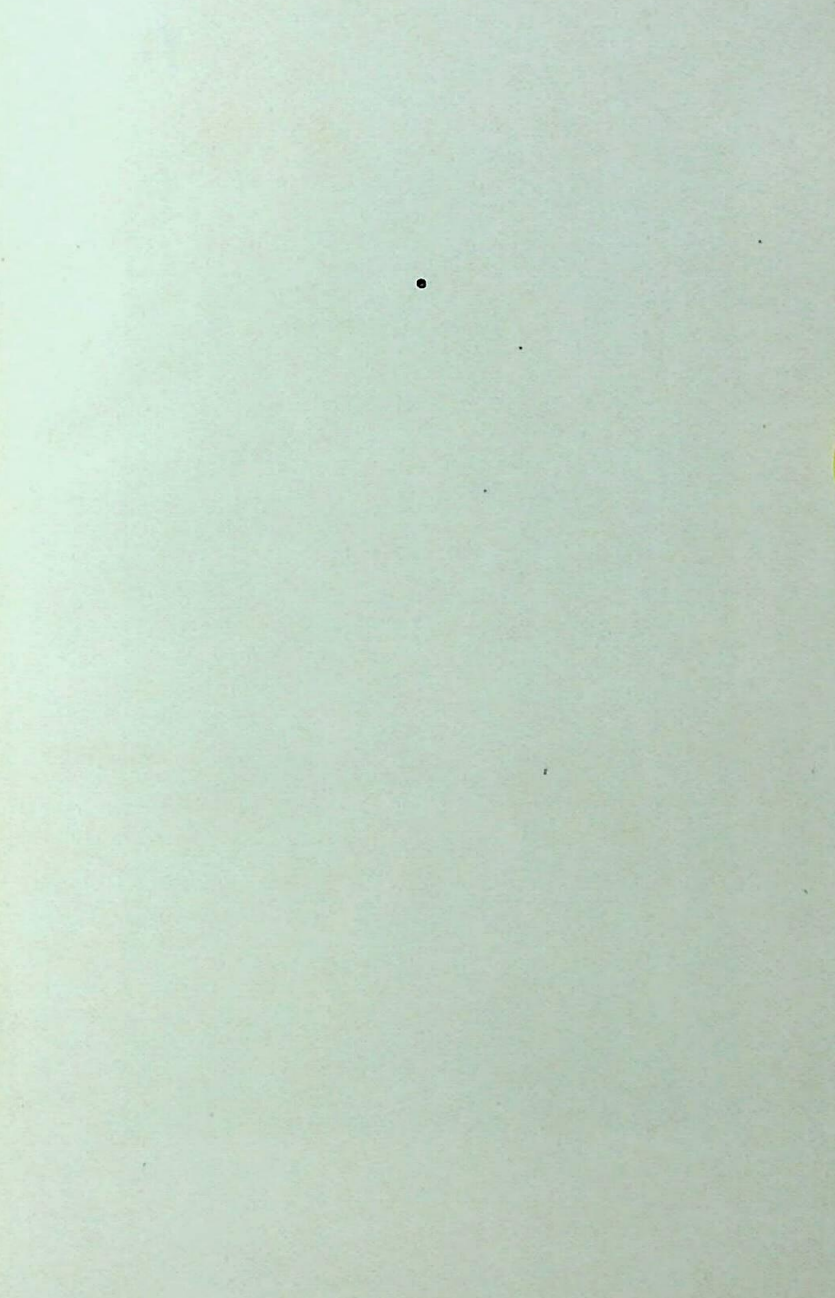
FOREWORD

This is an attempt to place on record *My Memoirs* or a short account of my life and experiences with a view to propagating the supreme and unbounded Glory of my husband's family Deity Sri Sri Govinda Rai,—the *Vigraha* or Figure of the Supreme Divinity graciously manifest in this mundane region out of His infinite Mercy. This is also to place on record the unbounded grace that God in His infinite Kindness has bestowed upon me out of compassion for this insignificant life of mine, and also to place on record an account of the visions of Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanya Deva and of the Great Saint Paramahansa Deva through which they were kind enough to reveal themselves to me.

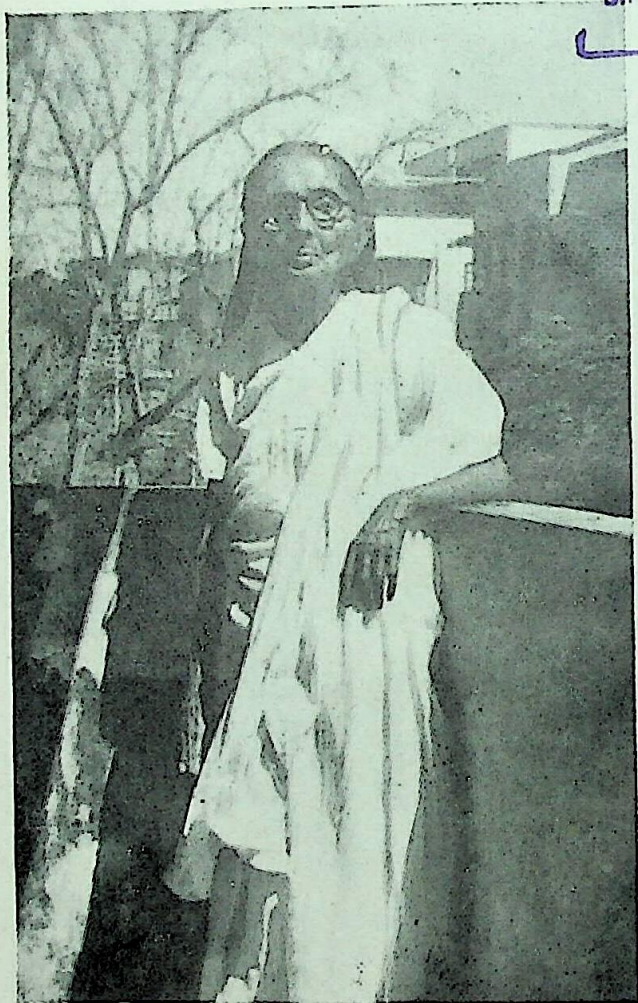
In this account of my life and experiences, the years of occurrence of particular events have been recorded both according to the English calendar and also according to the Bengali calendar. As such, it is possible that so far as the said years of occurrence are concerned, there might be slight discrepancies ; it is equally possible that there might not be any discrepancy or inaccuracy whatever in this regard. Save as aforesaid, a complete and accurate account of events as they occurred has been recorded by me in this account. Let no one feel inclined to doubt the authenticity of the events recorded herein. This is my earnest request.

Pratibhamayee Debi





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REMARKS

CHAPTER ONE

I lost my father at the age of six. My father, the late Govinda Chandra Dasgupta, was^o employed as Chief Assistant under the Board of Revenue, Calcutta. He died at the age of 44 of bronchitis, having suffered all the agonies of the disease for a brief period of three days only. His premature death resulted not only in leaving all our brothers and sisters helpless, but also in disrupting the management of our household. With three daughters, including myself, my mother took up residence in our village home in the district of Dacca after having made necessary arrangements for the prosecution of our brothers' studies. I am the youngest child of my parents.

I was brought up under the loving care of my widowed mother in the village, far away from the snares and temptations associated with wealth. My mother was an educated and religious minded lady having very liberal ideas. Right from our childhood, she would instruct us to have faith in God and would always give us wise counsel.

My mother gave me away in marriage when I was fourteen years old. At that time my husband was studying for his B.A. Examination. He also came from a fairly well-to-do family. While I was leaving for my father-in-law's house on the day following my marriage, my mother particularly enjoined me as follows: "Do please make it a point always to act in conformity with the wishes of your mother-in-law. Thereby you can ensure that you will never have any occasion to suffer." I would always remember this piece of advice given by my mother, and as far as possible, I would act according to my mother's advice. In days to come,

this piece of advice proved to be as beneficial in my life as my mother's blessings: my mother-in-law used to love me as her own child.

My husband was greatly devoted to his parents. Owing to his father's behest and his father's illness, he was obliged to waste the most valuable part of his early life. On the death of his father, he took up an appointment under the Estate of Raja Prabhat Kumar Barua of Assam-Gouripore and left for Gouripore in Assam. After a year and a half, he took me there together with our eldest daughter Lila, and our sons Jyotirmoy, Debabrata and Sudhindra. Srijut Dwijesh Chandra Chakravarty was then Dewan under the Assam-Gouripore Estate. His kind hearted wife used to love me dearly. After residing in Gouripore for about six years, my husband proceeded on transfer to a place known as Sukhchar. My eldest son Jyotirmoy was then studying for his Matriculation Examination. After a year, I arranged to send Jyotirmoy to Calcutta to take his examination, and went to Sukhchar accompanied by my husband and our three younger sons. Lila left for her father-in-law's place at Calcutta.

CHAPTER TWO

SUKHCHAR

It all happened in the month of Baisakh, 1324 B.S. Jyotirmoy had gone to Calcutta about a month previously to sit for his examination. I had to send my beloved son to a distant place after severing the affectionate ties with which he had been bound to me so long. I was a mother, and this fact naturally gave rise to anxious thoughts which made my mind so very restless that nothing seemed to give me solace.

On that fateful day, after having attended to my usual morning duties, I had started coaching my three younger sons. After a while, I gave them leave to go, and the boys left for playing. I took up a book and began reading it, but while reading it, I gradually became absent-minded.

I was thinking of various matters after having allowed the boys a holiday, when all of a sudden, my second son Debabrata came running up and said to me, "Mother, have you heard a terrible news?" I was startled and enquired what it was all about. He immediately blurted out, "Arun was run over by a railway train and is dead!"

I had no strength left in me to hear anything more and I lay down stunned. Arun! Oh, that boy Arun! He was none other than the eldest son of Dwijesh Chakravarty, the Dewan. It gave my heart a wrench to be told that this tender boy whom we used to know for the last six years is no more, and that the cruel hand of death had just snatched him away! I could not restrain my tears!

Many such incidents no doubt reach our ears during our lifetime, but how is it that I should be feeling such unbearable pain today? The boy was not related to me, but it seemed that the heart of the bereaved mother, scorched by the fire of grief caused by the tragic death of the boy, cast its reflection on my heart as well. I do not know how long I suffered in this manner. After my mind became a little composed, I started musing as follows: How very distressing it must be for Arun's mother to have to bear this terrible grief! The sorrow is simply unbearable! No doubt everybody could be visited with such hard blows through God's dispensation.

These and similar other thoughts were passing through my mind when I suddenly remembered that my *Didi Shashuri*

(father-in-law's mother) used to perform *Mangal-Candi Vrata* (religions rite observed by ladies on Tuesdays to propitiate and worship Goddess *Mangal-Candi*) every Tuesday throughout all the twelve months of the year with the object of ensuring the welfare of my father-in-law who was her only son. On the day she departed from this world after the termination of her *Vrata*, her dearest son, the recipient of all her blessings, was lying bed-ridden afflicted with a fatal illness. Was it because of an apprehension that the pious lady would be cut to the quick that the God of Death dared not lay his cold hand on her dearest son so long as she was alive ? Was it really an evidence of the compassion of the Mother of the Universe ?

Just as a drowning man catches at whatever happens to be at hand, even if it is unfamiliar, similarly I also, out of a feeling of sincere belief, became anxious to cling to this holy image of a mother with a sense complete faith and reverence. That very day I took a resolve to observe this *Vrata* (in honour of Goddess *Mangal-Candi*). As, however, it was well-nigh impossible to perform this *Vrata* at this place which was predominated by Muslims, I decided to observe the *Vrata* wherever it would be convenient to do so. Apart from this, I also resolved to offer my prayers every day at Her Feet.

I was accustomed to offer prayers at the lotus Feet of God from my early childhood, but I had never been taught to contemplate on His manifestation in any particular Form or Figure. Day and night I had been shedding tears for the fulfilment of my endless prayers, but I had not been blessed with a vision of His lotus Feet. Between Him and my humble self, it was all a void—a cruel endless void that seemed to divide ! My earnest prayers ever longed to reach upto the Unknown in unknown and

unchartered region beyond the blue firmament, but so far the search for Him proved futile.

Encaged in a body of flesh and blood, I had not dared to see with my sinful eyes, nor had I dared to imagine in my mind's eye the All-loving Absolute Knowledge, the Supreme Divinity Who is beyond the range of all human ken or all human knowledge. I was content to exert myself to the utmost in all my work. Just as any grievance felt by a child brings tears to its eyes, similarly my mental anguish caused by ever so trifling suffering found expression in tears offered at His Feet. Likewise, even minor occasions of joy would make me bow down at His Feet with a grateful heart remembering that all this was due to His kindness. The unknown attraction with which the Indwelling Immanent Divinity was drawing this insignificant and tiny individual soul to His lotus Feet was at that time beyond my comprehension.

Oh Lord of the universe, Oh my Lord, You did not let me realise then that You are Everything in my life.

At dead of night, I sat down to meditate,—but no sooner had I set my foot on this unknown path, then I realised the extent of my inexperience or ignorance. I had no real knowledge whatever of the fundamental principles of Hindu religion: whatever meagre idea I had in this regard was derived from what I had observed during performance of religious rites etc. and from what I had gathered from the conversations among old ladies. To crown all, I was as yet uninitiated. By what *mantra* (formula prescribed for invocation) should I invoke this All-benevolent Mother-aspect of the Supreme Divinity and further, how to worship this Form? Should I at the outset lay open my beggar's satchel without first tendering my offering of veneration at the Divine Feet?

These and such like thoughts crossed my mind directly I sat down to meditate. I became non-plussed having been faced with a dilemma. I further thought that Lord Visweswara should be worshipped first if I were to worship the Form of the Divine Mother. Is the Divine Mother after all an Entity distinct from the Supreme Godhead? My inquisitive heart sought in vain to find an answer to this question. However, after pondering for some silent moments, I mentally worked out a course of spiritual practice in my own way. I thought that however stupendous my ignorance, there is no risk of being laughed at in taking to this course: that however much people might laugh at me as a mad woman were I to give outward expression to the depth of my feelings, this is indeed a fit and proper place for the sincere outpouring of my heart's prayer. However faulty the rituals or rites. He is fully aware of my limitations and ignorance. I brushed aside all my hesitations and started my rudimentary spiritual practices. Having first recalled to my mind the names of Lord Visweswara, I bowed down in a spirit of loving devotion and veneration. Thereafter, having recalled to my mind the name of Mother *Mangal-Candi*, I bowed down at Her Feet. Laying bare my whole heart before the Mother, I started offering my prayer at Her Feet. I however, could not conjure up any Form of the Supreme Divinity. Some unknown solace so overpowered me that I did not realise what time of the night had passed by meanwhile. After offering up my prayer, I opened my eyes and saw that my husband was asleep. I also lay down on the bed.

I went on with this rudimentary and unostentatious spiritual practice of mine regularly without any break. Lest this practice, which I placed above all other work, should remain

unperformed, I would engage myself in my meditation and spiritual practice with rapt attention sitting by the side of my bed every night when the entire household would become perfectly calm. Just as a devoted wife feels joy in thinking all the while about her husband even in the midst of her day's work, irrespective of any question as to whether she has any leisure or not, similarly I found joy in my heart in contemplating on and chanting the name of the Divine Lord and worshipping Him. Further, I also started praying at the Feet of the Supreme Lord for a favour that I might never have to lose this secure anchorage in this unchartered voyage of my frustrated life. My husband could however guess this ritual of mine even though this remained a secret to every body else. With an amused smile, he asked me one day : "Do you recite the *Namaj* (a Persian word meaning, the daily prayers recited by devout Muslims in remembrance of *Allah*) every night ?" I also replied to this query with merely a smile.

CHAPTER THREE

MYMENSINGH

We came over to Mymensingh in the month of *Jaistha* after instructing Jyotirmoy by letter to take necessary steps to enable him to take his examination at Mymensingh on having his examination centre changed. The questions having leaked out, it had become necessary to shift the date of holding the examination to a date subsequent to that fixed originally. My father-in-law, at the time of his decease, died possessed of his own residence at Mymensingh where my husband's elder brother used to carry on his practice as a lawyer. We were required

to go there on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of his second daughter, Dolly. My husband left for Sukhchar after the said marriage had been celebrated. As, however, Jyotirmoy's examination was not yet over, it was decided that I would stay on at Mymensingh till the ensuing *Durga Pujahs*.

I commenced to observe my *Vrata* as soon as I arrived at Mymensingh. My revered mother-in-law would gladly render me every help on noticing such devotion on my part for Image-worship. I understood nothing about the inner significance of the *Vrata*, but would mentally contemplate on the Indweller of my heart,—the Immanent Divinity. In particular, I began to feel a joyous sense of having developed a feeling of complete reliance on Him, resulting from surrendering unto Him all my actions and thoughts unreservedly and from completely unfolding my heart,—and above all, to feel a soothing and healing sensation of some magnetic Attraction. Every resonance given out by the strings of joys and sorrows of life used to draw me with such tender sweetness towards the Indwelling Immanent Divinity that I would be lost to all notions of time and would simply make my obeisances and offer my prayers at His Feet. I was born in a *Sakta* (worshipper of *Sakti* or that Aspect of one of the Female Potencies of the Supreme Divinity known as *Durga* or *Kali*) family—My husband was a follower of the *Sakta* cult. The name of the Divine Mother to which I had clung in all earnestness following the family tradition, and the magnetic Attraction which was drawing me as though I were hypnotised, flooded me with Divine joy. However, the sweet Name which, like flashes of lightning, kept on appearing in my memory was that of the Divine Deity installed in my father-in-law's home, who was none other than Govinda, graciously manifest in the form of the Loving Divine Couple.

This spontaneous and singular remembrance of the Divine Name of *Govinda*, so soon after I had set out on the path of *sadhana* (spiritual practice), gave rise to a complicated problem in my mind. Being ignorant and untutored, I could find no solution to that problem. My conscience, however, clearly gave me this message : "He who is installed as your family Deity is superior to all the deities—He is the Deity of deities, and He alone is the Supreme Godhead". During my spiritual practice and meditation, I would therefore commence by first of all remembering again and again the sweet Name of *Govinda* and making obeisances to Him ; thereafter, I would make my obeisances to mother *Mangal-candi* and offer my prayers at Her Feet. Daughter of a *Sakta* father, and wife of a *Sakta* husband, I was terribly afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Divine Mother. It was because of this apprehension that I would pour forth my earnest prayers in all sincerity at the Feet of the Divine Mother.

On August 24. 1924 B. S., Jyotirmoy had left to sit for his Matriculation Examination. I was feeling rather perturbed in my mind that day for fear lest the questions might leak out this time also. Did I have the resources to make proper arrangements for the studies of this son of mine who was the most treasured possession of my life ? Or, would it be necessary for him to reside under the care of somebody else for prosecuting his studies ?

A deep sigh of anguish escaped me, and this chased away all my thoughts and forcibly made me remember the name of Mother *Mangal-candi*. Little caring whether the time was opportune or not, I began to offer my prayer with great concentration at Her Feet which are sought after by the whole universe. It was then mid-day.

All of a sudden, a vision appeared before my mind's eyes. Against a jet black background, I saw a female figure dressed in white, holding with both Her hands a dazzlingly white lyre. In the twinkling of an eye, that supra-mundane vision however, disappeared. My meditation and prayer also came to a stop.

Thoroughly stupefied, I began to ponder thus : "Is this a mere hallucination of my mind ? Has the Supreme Divinity whom the *yogis* and ascetecs cannot see even after rigorous spiritual practices, condescended to reveal Himself to an insignificant person like myself ? Is it really possible ? Oh Thou the Indwelling Immanent Omniscient Divinity, Thou alone knowest all about this !"

It was unbearable for me even to contemplate that I might have to drag on with the heavy burden of this miserable existence without the supreme felicity which was drawing me towards the Feet of the Supreme God head. I clung to the Name of God with all the strength and ardour of my heart, and I went on with my spiritual practices as usual.

CHAPTER FOUR

MYMENSINGH

In 1326 B. S., we had to go to Mymensingh on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of Dinesh, who was the eldest son of my husband's elder brother. My husband left for Sukhchar after the celebration of the marriage. On this occasion also, I had to stay on for a few days at Mymensingh owing to various domestic reasons. Throughout this long period of three years, I had been going on with my spiritual practices, having dedicated

myself at the feet of the Divine Mother. My heart and soul become suffused with chanting the Name of the Divine Mother. One day, however, my mind became completely alert, and raised the following poser : "The Divine Mother has endless Forms or Manifestations. Being uninitiated, I have been worshipping the Divine Mother in the Aspect of Mangal-candi. But the *sadhakas* (those engaged in spiritual practices for obtaining direct knowledge of God) worship the Divine Mother in the form of *Kali*. I shall no longer allow any perplexity to confuse me."

The twenty-third day of Aswin. 1226 B S., was the most memorable day of my life. It was then evening. Just at the commencement of my usual meditation and worship. I bowed down at the Feet of the Divine Mother after having conjured up a mental Image of Lord Viswanath lying stretched on the ground with my Divine Mother standing on the chest of Her consort in a martial stance and I prayed with the importunity of a child :

"Oh Mother, please tell me, in which form of the Supreme Divinity should I worship you in order that I might have access to You ?"

All of a sudden, transcendental moon-beams which rendered dim the light of the lamp burning in the room, flooded my inner vision. Whose was the solemn figure that I saw standing high up, absolutely still, in that clear light, fixing his tranquil gaze upon me ? It seemed to me as if I was being allowed sufficient time to enable me to recognise the identity of the person represented by that tranquil figure. Goodness gracious ! The figure was that of my husband !

Good Heavens ! The figure is so intimately known to me ! could there be any scope for making any mistake here ? The

same tall figure, the same broad forehead, the same fixed gaze of those large steady eyes—all these could only point to my husband ! There was absolutely no mistake whatever : There was that slightly contracted look in the lower lips and the cheek, owing to the premature loss of a few teeth, there was on his person his white coat which he has always been accustomed to wear, there was his right hand put inside the coat-pocket ! There was absolutely no mistake ! It was the self-same figure of his ; it was his usual dress, it was the same life-long habit of putting his right hand inside the coat-pocket ! There could be no mistake whatever !

After recovering from my dazed condition, I came to realise that the figure had not disappeared instantaneously : I was specially given sufficient time to enable me to recognise the figure. Hence this was not at all a case of mental hallucination or optical illusion on my part : every thing must have been true. I was in good health,—this was no untoward manifestation of any serious illness, this is nothing but a complete answer to the question propounded by my eager heart—this must be a striking example of the *Lila* (supramundane pastime) of the Eternal Absolute Truth ! Oh my Immanent Divinity, surely this is proof positive of Thy existence ! You reside also in the heart of even this insignificant and pitiable woman ! But oh my Mother what mystery is this ? This is the figure of a human being that has just appeared before me ! Would it mean the same thing as worshipping the Divine Mother if I were to worship this figure ? I have dedicated myself heart and soul to the sweet Name of the Divine Mother, and it is by that Name that I have been crying for you, oh Mother with an earnest heart. By what name am I then to worship the pair of feet of this figure ? Faced with this dilemma, I did not know what to do, I could fully realise

that I was being drawn by this definitely unmistakable, mysterious and unfathomable beckoning of the Supreme Divinity to an unknown and marvellous region. But I did not give way to despair. With all the strength that I could summon up in my heart, I clung desperately to the name of Mother *Mangal-candi* by which I had started worshipping the Supreme Divinity, and looked forward to the far distant future. Little did I realise at that time the nature of the marvellous initiation that this uninitiated life of mine was destined to receive for which the Supreme Spiritual Master of the Universe was summoning me. It was, however, not difficult for me to realise that in the circumstances, it was absolutely forbidden on my part to receive initiation from any human *Guru* (spiritual preceptor) during my life-time.

In Agra-hayana my husband escorted me to Sukhchar.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUKHCHAR

When one's heart, in a spirit of inquisitiveness, is anxious to put questions in order to be free from doubts, one is hardly able to rely on one's own discerning power. The Supra-mundane command that issues to one who has lain prostrate at the shrine of Lord Tarakeswara, begging for a miraculous solution to one's difficulties or problems, must have to be complied with,—however difficult the command might be. It is by wending its course over rugged path that the stream of loving service on the part of an individual finds its own fulfilment, Such inscrutable, such difficult indeed is the mandate of the Supreme Divinity.

My mind given to meditation and divine contemplation had become staggered, having been faced with a serious problem. However, my attachment and devotion to the Feet of the Supreme Godhead would not let me look backword towards the dark region characterised by sorrow and decay. Gradually I began to develop a spirit of absent-mindedness ; every moment of my leisure I would remain absorbed in the contemplation of God.

In course of time, while so engaged in contemplation, a supremely beautiful form, with charming bends and with arched brows, started floating before my mind's eyes. The surprise and joy, resulting from this vision, stirred my contemplative mood in no small measure. I had all these days repeatedly bowed down with loving devotion at His Feet,—all the while remembering His sweet sounding Name, but never for a moment did I dwell upon the beauty of His Supra-mundane Form. How surprising that His beauteous Form which enchants the whole universe has been taking shape before my mind's eyes today during a state of wakefulness ! A nebulous form no doubt, but clearly and unmistakably revealing. His Divine Personality thereby,—and further making manifest the deep and compassionate concern of the Absolute Infinite Self for the suppliant mood of the infinitesimally small finite self encaged in my physical body ! What intimate relationship does this signify—what unuttered sweet communication is this !

Oh Krishna, oh the Supreme Godhead, oh the Beautiful One, Oh Thou who art Eternally charming ! Ever since my birth, I am acquainted with this Enchanting Beauty of Thy form. Is it necessary that this time I should know Thee in particular ? By what lightning touch of Thine of a chord in my heart, hast Thou raised a vibrant note which keeps on whispering Thy

Message in the depth of my consciousness : "I am very much known to you ! I have been known to you from Eternity !"

CHAPTER SIX

I was enraptured by the notes of sweet music which floated across my mind like shadows and which were meant to rouse me from my stupour. Even though unable to stand erect by bringing under my control my jagged nerves, I had no difficulty in recognising The Indwelling Immanent Divinity,—the supreme lord SRI KRISHNA !

Oh Lord of the universe, you must be the Omniscient Immanent Divinity residing in the heart of every individual finite self ! Even from my infancy I used to lay bare a child's heart while making obeisance at your feet during meditation and to make an offering of all my joys and sorrows at you Lotus-Feet. Oh Lord, is that the reason why you have been pleased to grant me even before I reached my youth an asylum under the shelter of your feet ? Is my husband just a means to an end ? Oh my Lord, today of all days I have unerringly come to know you, Oh my Master, you alone are enthroned in my heart as the supreme Godhead. Oh God, is it because I have shed tears of joys and sorrows at your feet that you have not allowed me to wander away from you ? On one occasion, during meditation, I had prayed to you thus ; "Oh my creator, Oh my protector, Oh Lord. I do not know you ; but may my humble prayer reach your feet." Oh Lord of the universe, Oh the supreme Lord, Oh Krishna, Oh God, is that why Thou hast allowed this humble and insignificant woman to recognise Thee ? This is my earnest prayer to Thee, my Lord, that Thou may be graciously pleased to make me fit to be the recipient of this boundless Grace of Thine !

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUKHCHAR

It was then the month of Faigoon, 1326 B. S.

At dead of night I dreamt that I was standing still on an illuminated platform very high up, all alone, In front of me, say at a distance of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ cubits, a bare bodied man, dressed in white, with his head shaven, was seated at the foot of the Images of the Divine Couple and singing in a high resonant note to the accompaniment of a musical instrument which he was holding in his hand. The musician was in front of the Deities ; I was standing near by, gazing steadily without any movement.

All of a sudden, the scene vanished. A Supra-mundane melodious sound of flute arose from the site where the Divine had been seen ; keeping time with the musical cadence and lilt of the melodious tune of the flute, a temple started swaying and moving, and in the twinkling of an eye the temple halted in its dance-performance, having come up to a position which was at a distance of about a cubit to my right. In front of the temple, I was standing still, all alone, in a dauntless spirit ; inside the temple, the unknown flute was pouring forth music saturated with an ethereal sweetness in a soft mellifluous note which stirred one to the depth of one's being. Enraptured and in an ecstasy of joy, I was listening to the warbling note of the flute, utterly forgetful of myself. What intoxicating spirit of joy was it that coursed through all my being and made me overwhelmed with joy ! As the melodious note of the flute gradually began to subside, my gaze met that of my mother-in-law. I saw that she was standing outside the temple to its right, frightened and trembling, placing both her palms against

her knees in an embarrassed manner. Directly had my gaze met hers, she told me in a slightly commanding tone : "Here is Lord Govinda ! Do please bow down to Him." Immediately, I bent down my head and made obeisance at the threshold of the temple. As soon as I got up after having made my obeisance, my gaze was attracted by the interior area of the temple. The temple was enveloped in slightly dense smoke ; I had a hazy glimpse at the farthest end of the temple of an elevated seat which had a bright yellowish tinge !

Exactly at that moment, sleep deserted me. But even when awake, a current of supra-mundane bliss continued to flow through my heart. Bewildered with joy, I began to make obeisances over and over again at the lotus Feet of God.

Next morning, I got up early, but somehow I blundered at every step. All the while, I was remembering the Supreme Godhead and my mind was full of joy. Having somehow finished my duties, I sat down on a stool and started singing the following two lines, having myself set them to tune :

*Govinda Madhusudana, Govinda Madhusudana,
Govinda balo man, Govinda balo man ;*

(Oh Govinda, Oh Madhusudana, Oh Govinda, Oh Madhusudana, Oh my mind, chant the Name of Govinda, Oh my mind, chant the Name of Govinda !)

Overwhelmed with joy, I continued to sing over and over again the refrain consisting of these two lines. Suddenly my gaze was directed towards my husband ; I saw that he was looking at me, standing with a calm and unruffled attitude.

I am not aware what thought passed through his mind, but my heart became restless. With my mind overwhelmed with joy, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of God, and began to whisper : "Oh Thou the Indwelling Divinity, Oh Lord Govinda,

today Thou hast made this beggar woman intoxicated with supra-mundane joy by bestowing on her Thy limitless Grace ! Oh Krishna, Oh God, the enthralling melody resulting from the sound of Thy enchanting Flute has touched the innermost core of my heart and made me intoxicated with the wine of delight ! Oh my Lord, I am bowing down at Thy lotus Feet. My heart goes out in constant salutations to Thee !

CHAPTER EIGHT

(SUKHCHAR)

Just as a blind man is conscious of the costliness of a chunk of diamond even though he cannot realise its brilliance, similarly, even from my childhood, I began to realise all the Majesty and all the Supra-mundane mellow-sweetness of the Supreme Godhead, and was gradually being drawn towards Him as a result of such realisation, even though my mind, not having been blessed with spiritual vision, was unaware of His Inconceivable Nature.

The vision of the supreme mystery of the Universe, which it had pleased the Immanent Divinity to conjure up before my mental horizon at dead of night, after having made me fall into a dream, was after all a highly significant beckoning on His part which enraptured me and overpowered me with wonder and joy. I recalled my life's incidents in their proper sequence and came to the conclusion that it was to the Supreme Godhead and to Him alone that my mind has all throughout been attracted.

Oh Govinda, Oh my Govinda, Oh Krishha, Oh God, may Thou be graciously pleased to vouchsafe unto me a resort at

Thy lotus Feet ! Oh my Lord, to what unknown Transcendental Realm hast Thou summoned me by such mellow sweet tune ! Be pleased, Oh Lord, to make me worthy to occupy a place at Thy lotus Feet ! Oh my Lord, be pleased to make me free from all the desires and hankerings of my life ! Oh the Supreme Godhead, Oh Krishna, Thou who art dearest to me in life, Thou hast been pleased to bestow Thy limitless Compassion on me who am nothing but a street beggar. How long, Oh Lord, how long have I to endure this cruel distance of separation ? Oh God, be pleased to grant me an asylum at Thy lotus Feet for ever !

CHAPTER NINE

(MYMENSINGH)

In the month of Sravana 1327 B. S , my husband took up an appointment under the Estate of the Zeminder of Sherpur in the district of Mymensingh on relinquishing his services under the Assam-Gouripore Raj Estate. He left for Sherpur after making arrangements for my stay at Mymensingh for one month.

On the 19th day of Bhādra, at about midnight, while I was asleep, I dreamt as follows : The scene was at the residential homestead of my father-in-law at the village of Mouhali. There, at one end of the covered verandah of the building, my deceased grand mother-in-law was wringing her hands and asking anxiously : "What is to be done,—now that Goddess Lakshmi is missing ?" My mother-in-law entered the central room greatly perturbed. At the other end of the long verandah, I

had a vision of an exquisitely beautiful male figure of bright dark complexion seated on an elevated seat. He wore a grave and pale look. I was making obeisance at His lotus Feet with bended knees and bowed head, and plaintively uttering the following words : "Oh Lord, will You really be able to stay all by Yourself this time ?"

Immediately after making this mysterious utterance, I woke up. But I cannot describe what unknown tears welled up in the depth of my heart and made me ever so dejected. I failed absolutely to comprehend what message it had pleased the Supreme Divinity to communicate to me through this mysterious utterance. Memory of a distant past flashed before my mind, relating to a scene in a play on the Lord Buddha which I had been then witnessing. Lord Narayana was seated on His royal throne : Compassion personified in the form of a female was kneeling down at His lotus Feet and offering up prayers.

Oh my Lord, what *Leela* (Supra-mundane Pastime of the Lord) of Thine is this (of which I have been privileged to have a glimpse today) ! Who is this utterly destitute beggar woman who, with an undaunted spirit, is pouring out her sorrows at Thy lotus Feet which are coveted by the entire Universe ? A sense of joy, mingled with a feeling of pain, pervaded my whole being. With loving devotion and reverence, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of God. I had lost all count of time. Suddenly I was startled into wakefulness when I heard my mother-in-law calling me. The day had dawned a long while ago, but I was still in bed, With much concern, she asked me, "*Chhota Bou* (younger daughter-in-law), are you ill ?"

Hurriedly, I got up from my bed, but my mind was rather depressed. Around midday, I asked my mother-in-law, "Mother, will you kindly do me a favour ?" She replied, "What is it,

dear ? Please tell me." Quietly, I got up, took out a Guinea (gold coin) from my box and handed it to her with this request, "Kindly arrange to have manufactured gold crowns for Lord Govinda Rai and Goddess Lakshmi with this Guinea and have the crowns put on Their heads during the autumnal Pujahs." She, replied, "What's the hurry now ? Let your son Jyotirmoy pass his B. A. Degree Examination first. You may just as well give the offerings of the gold crowns thereafter." All my heart cried out in agony at this reply. Has the making of the offerings to be deferred till Jyotirmoy passes his B. A. Examination ? Remembering the Supreme Divinity, I mused within myself, "Oh my Lord, however meagre my earthly possessions, You have at any rate not made my mind bereft of a bountiful spirit." Addressing my mother-in-law, I said, "Oh mother, please do not raise any objection."

For a few moments, my mother-in-law gazed at me. Then in a voice charged with emotion, she said "*Chota Bou*, you had better make arrangements to go to our home and make obeisance to Lord Govinda before everything else."

Oh Govinda, Oh the Consort of my finite soul, Oh God, Oh my dearest Lord, how long is this distance resulting from separation to continue ?

CHAPTER TEN

(SHERPUR)

My husband took me to Sherpur in the month of Bhadra. We were strangers in a new place, and funds were essential to enable us to settle down on making provision for our household requirements. I found, however, that my husband was practically penniless.

It all happened on a *Lakshmi Purnima* (Full moon associated with the worship of Goddess Lakshmi) night on the 10th Kartick, 1327 B. S. During night, I started meditating after taking my seat by the side of my husband, who was asleep. I had become so fond of the Name of the Divine Mother that I could not cease chanting Her Name even after I came to realise fully the real nature of the Supreme Godhead. During my religious practices and meditation, I would at the outset take the Name of Govinda, being one of the various Names by which the Supreme Godhead is known, bow down to Govinda, and thereafter, I would offer my prayers at the lotus Feet of the Supreme Divinity by addressing the Supreme Divinity as the Mother. That night, with my heart afflicted with the growing pains of penury and want, I burst into tears as I prayed to the Divine Mother during meditation: "Oh Mother, please see that I am not cast adrift with my little children!"

Suddenly my meditation came to an end at the hooting of a nocturnal bird, and I came to realise that the night was far advanced. In a spirit of loving devotion and with bowed head, I offered my salutations at the lotus Feet of

the Divine Mother. A wonderful vision floated before my mind's eyes as soon as I had finished making my salutations ! The vision was as follows : With my head bowed down, I was making my obeisances ; in my front, high up, were visible two resplendent golden Arms of the Divine Mother on Her right hand side ; the lotus-like palm of Her upper Arm was facing downwards in a gesture signifying that there need not be any fear ; in the lotus-like palm of the lower Arm there was a golden flower whose Supra-mundane brilliance was scintillating on all sides like sparks of fire !

I raised my head and sat up. With a mute gratified heart and in a spirit of gratefulness, I bowed down again and again at the Feet of the Divine Mother. Oblivious of myself, I do not know how long I spent in this manner. On glancing sideways, I saw that my husband was fast asleep. Recalling the Name of God, I bowed down at His Feet with loving devotion. Again and again, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of the Supreme Godhead Who in His manifestation of Lord Govinda is installed in my heart, and thereafter lay down on my bed.

Oh Govinda, would to You Oh Lord, that i might never miss Your lotus Feet.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(SHERPUR)

In on about the first week of Agrahayana 1327 B. S., my husband left for one of the *Dihis* (area containing a few villages or a minor portion of an Estate) under the Zemindary estate for a period of two months owing to the exigencies of service. I remained at our Sherpur residence with my younger son Amitabha and my youngest daughter Sujata. Debabrata and Sudhin were at Mymensingh. As Jyotirmoy was due to sit for his B A. Examination that year, he was residing at the Eden Hindu Hostel in Calcutta.

The *Mangal-Candi Vrata* (a religious rite observed by Hindu ladies on Tuesdays in honour of the Divine Mother *Mangal Candi*) was to be performed during the bright fortnight of the month of Agrahayana. Apprehending that it would prove to be very difficult to procure all the requisites in this connection at this unfamiliar place where we were strangers, I wrote to my mother-in-law requesting her to perform the *Vrata* in my name and on my behalf at our village home.

It was on Tuesday, Agrahayana 29, that having come to the decision that I would first read the narrative on the *Vrata* from book, and thereafter sit down to meditate, I got ready to take my bath at 8 o'clock in the morning. Just when I was about to go to the place of bathing with my clothes in my arm, a beggar girl (named Kishori) came up to me, and entreated me with folded hands : "Oh mother, please give me a piece of wearing-cloth". But then, the difficulty is that, speaking generally, there is no dearth of beggars. Besides, I was in a hurry. I said, "Be off, I am now busy.

And my girl, wherefrom am I to find a piece of wearing-cloth for you?" But the girl was so persistent in her entreaty that she made my life miserable for the time being. Ultimately, I said, "Well, you had better see me later with a bundle of broomsticks. I shall then give you a piece of wearing-cloth." The girl replied, "This day is Tuesday, I shall be coming on Friday." I dismissed the beggar girl after giving her a small quantity of rice, and went to bathe.

After taking my bath, I finished reading the narrative on the *Vrata*, and next, sat down to meditate. During meditation, however, it was the thought of that beggar girl that constantly recurred in my mind. Even though I fought hard to brush aside that thought, the plaintive appeal of the beggar girl ruffled the concentration essential to meditation. Having finished my meditation rather hurriedly, I got up in a repentant mood, and summoning my servant, told him, "Oh Praphulla, would you mind going out immediately to see if the beggar girl could be found in the street?" After some time, he returned and reported that he had looked for her, but failed to find her.

I was so troubled in my mind throughout the day that I could not realise how the day passed. After finishing my evening meditation, I went to bed early. It was after 4 o'clock in the early morning that sleep deserted me. In the stillness of the night, the piteous words of the beggar girl began to torment me so acutely that I felt extremely depressed out of a sense of remorse. Again and again, the thought arose in my mind: "Oh, how very poor are these people! To think that I who have been soliciting alms day and night at the Feet of God by holding open my beggar's satchel, should have been so wretched and unkind that I did not hesitate to

turn away this beggar girl when all that she had come to ask for was just a trifling piece of wearing-cloth !”

Remorse made it impossible for me to check the flow of tears. Covering my eyes with both my palms, I cried out in the agony of my heart : “Oh Lord Narayana, how is it that You were graciously pleased to summon in such mellow sweet tune at the gate of *Vaikuntha* even such a wretched creature as myself !”

My eyes, dimmed by the flow of tears, were shut. Against the resulting darkness, forming a dark background, there loomed up the figure of a golden crown, as big as a large diadem scintillating in its Supra-mundane golden rays ! The whole scene was perfectly still and steady !

Oh Govinda, Oh Govinda, Oh Thou the King of the Universe, Oh Thou, the Supreme Ruler of all ruling kings, Oh Thou the Supreme Ruler of the entire Universe, Oh Krishna, Oh God, O the Indwelling Immanent Divinity, what is that memory of my life-time that it has pleased Thee to stir up in particular and arouse from its slumber on opening the door of the chamber of memories crowding my life ? Oh my Lord, now I am convinced that in this dilapidated hut of this poor and insignificant woman, Thou hast really been by my side always and ever ! Oh Lord, Thou art full of limitless Compassion, Be pleased to make me worthy to receive this unbounded Grace and Compassion of Thine !

The next day at about 8 A. M., the beggar girl turned up with a bundle of broomsticks in her hand. Approaching me, she said. “Look mother, I have brought the broomsticks today.” She was due to come after two days, but my heart became full of joy as she turned up in advance that very day. I handed her quite a good piece of wearing-cloth, paid her

separately for the price of the bundle of broomsticks, and told her, "Oh, you have done very well." I gave her some rice and asked her to call after a month. The girl agreed and left. Having dismissed the girl, I straightway went inside the house without looking in any other direction, and having prostrated myself on the ground with all my eight limbs, began to make obeisances over and over again at the lotus Feet on the Supreme Godhead. A sense of gratefulness filled my entire heart. I prayed—"Oh Krishna, Oh God, Oh Govinda, Oh Lord, may I never cease to be in close proximity to You !"

I became particularly anxious to go to our family dwelling-house in the village. As it was not possible to undertake a journey there during my husband's absence, I began to look wistfully for the day when he might be expected to arrive.

My husband arrived at Sherpur in the month of Magh. Even the thought of broaching before him the subject of the intended trip to our village dwelling house made me nervous. He was on the whole worldly minded and loved worldly comforts. Further, discussion on such matters was not very much to his liking. As a matter of fact, he used to advise me to pay attention to worldly and household affairs. As such, how was I to broach before him the subject of my proposed visit to our village home ? I could find no means whatever of arranging a trip to our village home. If I were to make the request to my husband, he would say "You must have gone off your head. Please give up all such ideas, and pay greater attention to worldly affairs." It is but natural that any statement made by me which would fail to stand the test of accepted standards of proof would be put down as the whim or fancy of a lunatic and as such become the subject-matter of everybody's ridicule.

The year was about to expire : in silence, I kept on counting the days.

Towards the first week of Falgoun. Sm. Sujata, who was then a child in arms, became seriously ill having been attacked with remittent fever. I became very much worried. This was not a place where arrangements for proper medical treatment could be made.

On Falgoun 14, 1327 B. S., Sujata's temperature shot up so high that I became alarmed. During my spiritual practices and meditation, I wept at the Feet of the Divine Mother and said, "Oh Mother, may You be graciously pleased to save my darling Sujata !" At the end of my meditation, I went to bed.

At dead of night, I dreamt as follows : I saw in my dream a large tank, from one end of which I was stepping down into it hugging Sujata to my bosom. Suddenly, I slipped and fell into deep waters, and immediately I clasped Sujata on my bosom firmly. We were not, however, drowned.

In my dream, I saw that with both of my arms spread apart, I was lying afloat in a calm sheet of water. Sujata was also lying on my breast in a similar manner. On top of both of our breasts, placed one upon the other, there appeared, right in the middle, the word "GOVINDA" written in deep black letters which shone with supra-unmdane brilliance.

My sleep deserted me. With a grateful heart, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of God. I came to know (in the morning) that the doctor attached to the hospital at Sherpur who recently assumed charge of his office here for one month, was an experienced man and that he was intimately known to my father-in-law. On being informed of Sujata's illness, he at once called at 8 o'clock in the morning to see her. After being placed under his careful treatment, Sujata came round in course of a week. With a grate-

ful heart, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of God. With a stupefied mind, I thoroughly reviewed my life-history, and I arrived at the conclusion that it was only on the Supreme Godhead that my faith and loving devotion have throughout remained unshaken. The conclusion was irresistible that though in the complex chess-board of Fate, I chose to cling in my heart to the Supreme Name of the Divine Mother, the trend of my spiritual practices had somehow meandered along diverse courses, and it was constantly drawing me to the close proximity of One Who has been known to me since Eternity and One Who is the Dearest of all !

Oh Thou whose Real Self is beyond all imagination ! Oh Krishna, Oh God, Oh Govinda, I now realise that after all Thou hast been graciously pleased to grant me a resort under the shelter of Thy Feet. Ever since my childhood, I have poured out all my joys and sorrows at Thy Feet on laying bare the recesses of my heart. Oh the Supreme Support of my life, it is Thy Infinite Self, it is Thy lotus Feet, that I, who am but an insignificant and humble woman, ignored by the whole world, have all along been clasping to my bosom ! Oh Krishna, Oh Thou who art so very dear to my life, Oh my dearest Supreme Divinity, is that why it has pleased Thee to give me a place under the shelter of Thy Feet without allowing me to wander away ? Is that why during my spiritual practices and meditation I become so much absorbed in the contemplation of Thy lotus Feet ?

Oh the Immanent Divinity, Oh Krishna, Oh God, may I never lose my place at Thy lotus Feet !

CHAPTER TWELVE

(SHERPUR)

I became desperately eager^c to visit our country home. Towards the last week of Falgoun, I told my husband, "Do please escort me to our home." But he emphatically said, "Oh, that is out of question now. Why have you become so eager to go home now?" I remained silent. I thought of God and made this submission: 'Oh, the Indwelling Immanent Divinity, it has pleased Thee to let me roam in this wide world on making me destitute in all respects. But this is my prayer to Thee, Oh Lord, that I may succeed in carrying out Thy behest. Oh God, have mercy upon me!'

It was then the third week of the month of Chaitra. *Hari-Samkirtan* (chanting and singing in a loud voice the Divine Name of Hari, set to tune, in congregation) was going on in the adjoining house of Nisi Babu. Worried with my own problems, I was musing: "The current month is about to expire. How would it be possible to visit our village home in view of the strong disapproval of my husband so far as this proposed visit is concerned?" In despair, I was turning over these thoughts in my mind.

Suddenly my thought-current was halted in its course. Keeping time with the concluding portion of the holy *Kirtan*, a boy, having a melodious voice, started singing in a mellow sweet tune:

"Oh my brothers, respond to the chanting of the Name of Hari and go round all the various quarters. As regards those who simply harbour the desire to cross over to the other side (without striving), the sands of time inevitably run out".

Keeping time with the rhythm of the sound of the musical instrument, the boy continued to sing this concluding refrain over and over again.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN (SHERPUR)

The year was about to be over, but I was as yet unable to make my obeisances at the lotus Feet of God. This thought made me shudder all over, both inwardly as well as outwardly, with a burning sensation, as though I were struck by some kind of electric current. With a grim determination, I bestirred myself, and thought that I would make a last attempt.

On the 20th day of Chaitra 1327 B. S., I gathered together such clothing and bedding as would be appropriate during a journey. At night, at the conclusion of my spiritual practices and meditation, I prayed to God for His kind assistance in carrying out my resolve, remembered and took God's Name and began to bow down to Him again and again. I became somewhat dazed. The hour was not yet past 10 P.M. I was awake.

While in that dazed condition, I distinctly saw in the firmament above a large disc of the moon in all her divinely brilliant and soothing light. The entire blue firmament, extending up to the horizon, was fully illumined by the brilliant moon-beams. With unflinching gaze, I was looking at that scene. All of a sudden, my gaze began to shift from above to below, and from below to above.

I saw that from above, that brilliant circle of moon, huge in its dimension, was pouring forth rays of light on my bosom. In that divinely brilliant light, I saw clearly and very distinctly scrawled over my entire bosom in dark scripts, enormous in size, and giving out supra-mundane brilliance, the word "GOVINDA" !

Suddenly, I was roused from the spell of stupour. This awakening began to infuse in every fibre of my being in an unerring manner all the diversified *Leelas* (Supra-mundane Pastimes of the Lord) of the Eternal Absolute Truth !

Oh, Thou the *Guru* (Spiritual Master) of the Universe, Oh Lord, it has pleased Thee to reveal to me today my *Ista-Mantra* (Holy Name or formula given by the *Guru* to the disciple at the time of initiation which the disciple has to repeat and meditate upon throughout life) made up of Thy sweet Name. It has pleased Thee to initiate me in the Highest form of initiation today and Thou hast thereby enabled me to realise that Thy sweet Name is to be my *Ishta-Mantra* !

Oh Govinda, Oh Govinda, Oh Lord, may I be privileged to chant this sweet Name of Thine till the last moment of my life ! Oh Krishna, Oh God, may Thou be graciously pleased to grant me this prayer !

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I got up very early in the morning and immediately made all arrangements for starting for our village home. Just as my husband was about to leave for his office after taking his tea, I fell at his feet and clasping them said, "Please, would you please take me home this very day! This is my humble submission at your feet."

He looked at me. In a deep and unruffled voice he said, "Are you really off your head? You want to leave this very day! How can that be arranged?" I burst into tears. Surprised, he asked me, "Why are you so eager to go home?" I could not tell him anything. In a choked voice, I simply said, "I am entreating you by touching your feet. Do please take me home this very day." He thought for a few moments, and then said, "You just make all arrangements. I would be coming back after taking seven days' leave." He returned to our house very early. At about 1 p.m. we set out for home.

During the uninterrupted interval of the long journey, I forgot all about myself, on realising the infinite Grace of God. My mind was overwhelmed with joy, and I could not restrain my tears.

A little before dusk, on Chaitra 23, 1327 B. S., accompanied by my husband, we, along with our three young boys and Sm-Sujata, reached my husband's country-home at village Mouhali. My heart was filled with joy. My mother-in-law was at home: she became surprised on seeing us. Looking at me, she exclaimed, "Oh my daughter-in-law, it seems as if you have ceased to take all interest as regards your health. Now, this is certainly

not desirable. What is it that afflicts you my child ?" My husband said. "Oh mother, as to the only thing that is wanting so far as your junior daughter-in-law is concerned, I may say that she is just waiting to lose her sanity !"

On the 24th. day of Chaitra, 1327 B. S., I got up early in the morning, and immediately began to make myself ready for that auspicious moment. Disturbing thoughts, however, assailed me : would I be able to bow down at the lotus Feet of God with a tranquil heart ?

Even after carrying on my religious practices over a fairly long period of time, I have so far been unable to realise fully the true nature or concept of the Absolute Infinite Self and further, failed to realise how the Supreme Infinite Self can simultaneously be conceived as manifest in a finite Form or Figure. Would I, who have all along been accustomed to regard the Indwelling Lord of all individual souls as without any Form or Figure, be able to bow down in a tranquil spirit at the lotus Feet of the Holiest Figure of the Supreme Divinity graciously manifest in this world out of His infinite Mercy and inconceivable Power, which are coveted by the whole Universe ? In a bewildered state of mind, I continued to pray at the Feet of the Lord thus—"Oh, the Indweller of individual souls, O Lord, be pleased to grant me this prayer, that I may be permitted to bow down at Thy lotus Feet with all my heart and soul !"

It was then mid-day. I understood from the resonant sound of blowing of conch at the place of worship that the *Puja* was over. Somehow or other, a sort of fear gripped me at the thought of making obeisances all alone at the lotus Feet of God. I began to look around to ascertain my husband's whereabouts. I saw that he was standing on the

verandah of the building. Placing a portion of my wearing-cloth around my neck (in a spirit of humility), I first bowed down to him, and, thereafter, taking hold of his hand, proceeded towards the place of worship. Like one dazed, he moved along with me.

The auspicious moment for me was lit up by the glare of brilliant white rays. We bowed down at the flower-bedecked Feet of the Figure of the Immanent Supreme Divinity, Who is worshipped by the three worlds, Who is without any mundane Form, and Who has yet, out of His inconceivable Prerogative, graciously condescended to be manifest in a Finite Form !

O Govinda, O Krishna, O God, O the Indwelling Lord of every individual soul, O my Lord, be pleased to accept the obeisances of this beggar woman, who is utterly destitute !

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

On Chaitra 29, 1327 B. S., we returned to Sherpur accompanied by my husband. All my doubts were removed and I had a clear concept of the real Nature of the Supreme Godhead. I began to render my obeisances to His lotus Feet and to carry on my spiritual practices by chanting only the name of 'Govinda'.

At dead of night on the last day of the month of Chaitra, 1327 B. S., I had a dreadful vision in my sleep. In my dream, I saw in front of me a male figure having a fair complexion, wearing a white piece of cloth. The long sacred thread around his bare body reached his waist. On his wide forehead, there

was a large *tilak* mark of red colour, circular in shape ! He was gazing at me with very angry eyes, and was forcibly pulling the thumb of my right hand. I cried out in agony when my husband roused me from my sleep. The very next moment, however, I again fell into a stupour and a lovely and pleasing image floated before my mind's eyes : I saw that two tufts (formed of *Durva* grass), protruding from the *khili* (rolled up leaf with *Durva* grass used in connection with the worship) of the Divine Mother *Mangal-candi*, placed levelly, were touching my forehead with the, *Durva* grass !

As consciousness returned to me, I became non-plussed and fell to musing that this must definitely mean some indication given by God of coming events. Possibly I am on the brink of a terrible misfortune, and God would vouchsafe unto me His blessings when the misfortune would be over ; possibly this means that when my sufferings would be over, I would be the recipient* of the blessings which the Supreme Lord, manifest as the Divine Mother, had been pleased to bestow on me with both Hands, as indicating the twin gifts, viz., Her blessings and next, Her assurance dispelling all fear. With this hope, I summoned up courage, and applied my mind to my regular spiritual practices.

Oh the Indweller of individual souls, Oh my Lord, You have indeed been pleased to reveal Yourself to me ! O my Lord, be pleased to grant me this favour that I may never fail to cultivate an unswerving devotional spirit of *Bhakti* (rendering loving services to God) at Your lotus Feet. Oh Lord, be pleased to grant me the requisite strength and the favour that to the last day of my life, I may make my obeisance at Your lotus Feet and be able to chant Your Name, the sweet *Ista Mantra* of mine which has verily been vouchsafed unto me by You !

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

In Ashad 1328 B. S., I was^e taken ill with rheumatism. Suffering from unbearable pain all over my body and also from unbearable headache, I was confined to bed. During this period of unbearable agonies, I devoted my mind with greater concentration to my spiritual practices and prayed day and night at the Feet of God for His Mercy.

Suddenly I recalled that I had been particularly enjoined by God to worship Him in the person of my husband. As soon as I recalled this, I started making obeisances at my husband's feet and drinking water into which the toes of his feet had been dipped every day both in the morning as well as in the evening on dwelling on the Name of God. It was four years after I had started worshipping God that I took to this new method of worshipping Him. On receiving news of my illness, my husband's elder brother made arrangements for having me removed to his residence at Mymensingh. An experienced and efficient Kaviraj of Mymensingh took up my treatment. Under his treatment, I was completely cured after eight months, and then I returned to Sherpur. I had begun to worship and bow down at the Feet of God in a particular manner, and the anxious thought which again and again cropped up in my mind was that I must never fail even for a single day to go through the programme of worship which I had begun as aforesaid.

After I had offered at my husband's feet my loving and worshipful services for God in this manner for four years, I was drawn by some inconceivable beckoning to the gracefully entwined lotus Feet of my life's most beloved, All-Merciful

Supreme Godhead, appearing in His Ever-beauteous Enchanting Form, playing on a flute and charmingly clad in His well-known yellow robe.

Oh Govinda, O Krishna Who is so very dear to my life, Oh God, it has pleased You after all these days to wipe the tears welling out owing to the pangs of separation from You ! O Krishna, O God, O Lord, be pleased to grant me this prayer that I may never lose Your lotus Feet ! O the Indweller of hearts, be pleased to grant me this favour !

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I applied my mind to my spiritual practices with great regularity. My mind became so attracted to the worship of God that it was in practising such worship that I found joy. Attending to my household affairs appeared to me to be just something which had to be done.

In November 1928, my *Chhota-dada* (junior among my elder brothers) Nirmal had me taken to Patna where he used to practise as a lawyer. My mother was then living. Just to visit her once, I along with Sm. Sujata, went to Calcutta, accompanied by Subodh, husband of the daughter of my husband's elder brother. Thereafter, my *Chhota-dada* had me taken over to Patna. After about a month or so, *Chhota-dada* arranged to send his wife and children, Sujata and myself to Madhupur for change of air. This loving brother of mine had very great affection for me. It was owing to his love and affection that I did not feel that I had lost my father. During our stay at Madhupur, *Chhota-dada* arrived there in March. He was

accompanied by my cousin (uncle's son) Jagadish who was due to go to Dacca. My *Bara Bou-didi* (wife of my eldest brother) was then in Cuttack. It was decided that *Chhota-bda* with his family would go to Puri via Cuttack, and that I, along with Sujata, would go to Dacca accompanied by Jagadish. My eldest son Joytirmoy was then a Professor at the University of Dacca. My three younger sons used to reside with him and prosecute their studies in College.

In April 1928, we were in Madhupur. I do not remember the date, because I did not realise at the time that this particular day would prove to be so very memorable in my life.

It all happened at Madhupur in the month of April. I was lying in bed. The time was about 8 p. m. I was awake and was thinking of various matters. Just then, I had an inner vision of an exquisitely handsome man standing before me at a distance of about a cubit and a half from me! His complexion was similar to the hue of bright gold. He was dressed in white, with spotlessly clean sacred threads placed on his left shoulder which reached down to his right waist. In a commanding tone, he told me :

"You must make it a point to visit Vrindaban."

The very next moment, the Figure disappeared. It was no hallucination, no dream. I was wide awake. This was verily a case of having a direct vision during a period of wakefulness! I had definitely seen Him,—there could be no dispute, no mistake about it! O Thou Superman, Who art Thou that has been pleased to show Thyself to an insignificant destitute humble female like myself? O compassionate One, it has pleased Thee to disappear after commanding me in a deep voice to visit Vrindaban, the land which is associated with the Transcendental

Pastimes of the Supreme Godhead Sri Krishna Who is my life's very dearest one !

Who art Thou, O Superman, who hast been kind enough to rouse me,—to awaken this inexperienced life of mine from slumber ? O the Enlightened One, be pleased to bless me that I may be able to carry out Thy behest !

Gradually it dawned upon me that the figure was that of Caitanya Deva, the Greatest among men,—the Prince of devotees, the greatest of *Sannyasis* (ascetics), who was intoxicated with love for the Supreme Godhead. He is known all over the world by his golden complexion and matchless beauty. It must be He who out of His infinite compassion was pleased to appear before me and directed me specifically to visit Vrindaban. While engaged in my spiritual practices, I would always pray as follows at the Feet of God,—“Oh Krishna, Oh the Supreme Godhead, Oh Lord, grant me this favour that I might be able to carry out the behest of the Greatest of your loving Servitors !” And every day, at the conclusion of my spiritual practices, I would bow down with great devotion at the lotus Feet of Lord Caitanya Deva, the Superman.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

On the day we were due to set out for our destination, I had got up very early in the morning and was busy preparing tea. On that very day, I was due to leave for Dacca accompanied by Jagadish. The departure time of the train was 11 A. M., and hence all arrangements had to be made quickly. I was turning over these thoughts in my mind, when my *Chhota, dada* turned up and said, "O Amodini, you also had better accompany us to Puri. Since the small hours of the morning, my mind has been constantly urging me that arrangements must be made to take you also to Puri along with us. You could go to Dacca later on". I replied, "That is all right, but *Chhota-dada*, have you realised that you would be put to extra expenses in making arrangements for the journey of two of us?" He said "Don't you worry about these matters. Please get ready quickly".

An intense longing to visit Lord Jagannath in Puri would very often disturb my mental equanimity, but I have all along forcibly put it down. Of what avail is any desire or longing on the part of one whom God has been pleased to send out in this world as such a destitute creature? My brother, who is full of affection for me, is eager today to fulfil that longing on my part! Quickly I made everything ready.

Towards the third week of April 1928, we reached Puri via Cuttack. We reached Puri early in the morning, and immediately thereafter, we took our bath and set out for visiting Lord Jagannath.

On arrival at the Temple, we made our obeisances to the *Vigrahas* (Deities graciously manifest in this world) on touching Their lotus Feet after obtaining the permission of the *Pandas* (priests attached to Temples and places of pilgrimage). My heart was flooded with joy.

Oh Jagannath, the Supreme Godhead from whom all other divinities have emanated' O *Purushottama*, Thou art none other than my life dearest Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Divinity. O Lord, be pleased to accept the salutation of this humblest of women. O Lord of the Universe, Thou art worshipped in this great centre of pilgrimage with all the pomp and grandeur befitting a king! O Lord, my heart has become full of joy! O the Indwelling Divinity, O Lord, be pleased to grant me that strength, that loving devotion, that favour whereby I, a mere beggar woman, may dedicate myself heart and soul at Thy lotus Feet!

Part II



CHAPTER ONE

After three days' stay at Puri, I, along with Sm. Sujata, and accompanied by Jagadish, arrived *via* Calcutta at Jyotirmoy's house in Dacca. After residing there for a few days, I came back to my husband at Sherpur with my three younger sons. My husband said, "Well you have now returned after a fairly long trip. Please pay a little attention henceforward to household matters."

My husband was taken ill after a few years with high blood pressure. He therefore decided to relinquish his job and go to Dacca and reside there on renting a house. Jyotirmoy was then at Oxford. My youngest son, Amitabha, engaged a house and made all necessary arrangements. Amitabha was then employed under Oriental Life Insurance Co. at Dacca. Shortly thereafter, Devabrata came over from Calcutta, and after escorting us to our new residence at Dacca, went back to Calcutta. Thus ended our long sixteen years' stay at Sherpur for good.

My husband's health gradually began to deteriorate. I became nervous. I would be placed in great difficulty unless Sm. Sujata's marriage could be celebrated during my husband's life-time. With tears I would make my submissions at the feet of God, 'Oh Govinda, O Lord, be pleased to save my husband's life! Sm. Sujata has to be given in marriage, but what power have I got to make necessary arrangements therefor!'

Oh the Indwelling Divinity, Oh Lord, You have been graciously pleased to fulfil this earnest desire on my part out of Your

infinite compassion. Oh Lord, be pleased to accept the salutations of a grateful heart !

My husband gave Sm. Sujata in marriage to a very desirable bridegroom who came of a well-known family. Everybody commented : "The marriage alliance leaves nothing to be desired and has been excellent beyond all expectations." My heart was full to the brim with happiness and tranquillity. At that time, my husband was in fairly good health. After giving Sm. Sujata away in marriage in the month of Aগ্রহায়ণ, my husband returned to Dacca from Calcutta. Only a few months thereafter, he became confined to bed with high blood-pressure. Only ten months after Sm. Sujata's marriage, my husband passed away peacefully at the age of 68. My life's companion, with whom I had shared all the joys and sorrows of life, left me for good ! God alone knows for how long I would have to bear the burden of this miserable existence of mine !

CHAPTER TWO

At the time of my husband's death, Jyotirmoy and Amitabha were both at Dacca. Debabrata and Sudhindra hurriedly came over from Calcutta. After finishing the last rites in connection with the funeral ceremonies of their father, Debabrata and Sudhindra went back to Calcutta. At the end of a year, on completion of the prescribed rites due to be performed on the expiry of one year from my husband's death, I came to my husband's village home at Mouhali accompanied by Amitabha.

On reaching home, we first of all made our obeisances at the lotus Feet of the Divine Deity Shri Shri Govinda Rai.

Oh Govinda, Oh the Supreme Godhead, he who had led me to the shelter of Your lotus Feet is no longer in this world. Oh Lord, may You be pleased to grant this prayer of mine that I may end my life by bowing down at Your Feet and by worshipping You ! .

After staying at our village home for a few days, I came back to Dacca along with Amitabha. As his leave-period had expired, it was not possible to stay at our village home for a longer period. Besides, it was inconceivable that I should live in that deserted house all alone.

I had a talk with the *Sebait* (human ministrant of the Deity who is the Deity's manager) Prasanna Chakravarti and said to him, "My earnest request to you is that you would please continue to discharge even now the duties relating to the worship of and the offering of *Bhog* (offering of Deity's food) to the Divine Deity Sri Sri Govinda Rai as done by you heretofore. I have to reside far off from this place ; still, I would certainly recompense you to the best of my ability. He agreed. It is he who has for a long time been efficiently discharging the duties connected with the worship of and the offering of *Bhog* to the Divine Deity Sri Sri Govinda. I had every confidence in him.

That was the last occasion during my life-time when I made my obeisances at the lotus Feet of (our family Deity) Lord Sri Sri Govinda Rai. Little did I know at that time that in future I would never have the strength or the opportunity to visit our village home to seek refuge under His Divine Feet. Oh the Indwelling Divinity, this is indeed a phase of Your sporting mood !

CHAPTER THREE

About a year and a half after my husband's death, Amitabha became very ill having been attacked with dyspepsia, and he, along with me, moved over to Sudhindra's residence at Bombay for a change. Sudhindra was employed as an officer of the Reserve Bank of India and he had taken up his residence at Bombay a few years ago. Immediately on reaching Bombay, arrangements were made to place Amitabha under proper medical treatment. On Sudhindra's advice, and as a result of the joint efforts of both the brothers, Amitabha was absorbed in the permanent set-up in his employer-Company's head office at Bombay, I also stayed on with these two brothers. Our Dacca establishment was closed down for good.

My life's duties, however, were not yet finished. It was now essential to arrange for the marriages of these boys, and I directed my efforts to that end. The marriage ceremonies of Jyotirmoy and Sujata had been celebrated during my husband's life-time. Debabrata did not agree to go in for matrimony. On arriving at Bombay, I arranged to get Sudhindra married that very year. Four years thereafter, I got Amitabha married. He is junior to Sudhindra by four years and is the youngest of my sons. About a year and a half, or about two years after Amitabha's marriage, I turned my mind to the worship and contemplation of God to the best of my abilities, having entrusted my daughters-in-law with the charge of all household duties.

In Sravana, 1357 B. S., I removed to Amitabha's residence. Sudhindra's residence was also very near to it.

My youngest son Amitabha and his wife had both been initiated under the Rāmkrishna Misson. A portrait of Paramahamsa-deva was placed on an *asana* (seat) in their bedroom. I have always held this great saint in high regard, and every day, after my regular mid-day spiritual practices, I would bow down reverentially before the said portrait of Paramahamsa-deva.

One day, during the summer of 1358 B. S., my daughter-in-law requested me to offer *Bhog* (food) to the Divine Deity. As desired by her, I offered a few raisins as *Bhog*. For some reason or other, my mind was a little distracted. After the *Bhog* had been offered, I put the raisins, through mistake, back into the same pot wherefrom I had taken them out. Immediately, I realised my own mistake and handed over all the raisins in the said pot to my daughter-in-law in the kitchen, and told her: "I have made a great mistake. You had better use up all these raisins in preparing the cooked food."

As it would not be proper to store any article intended to be offered for *Bhog* in this pot without washing it thoroughly, I went to the bathroom and started cleansing the pot with water after scrubbing and polishing it as much as possible.

My eyes were then closed. All of a sudden, I had a very clear vision—presumably an inner vision—of Sri Sri Paramahamsa-deva standing just to my right at a distance of about a *bighat* (half a cubit) and a half. It was a shadowy figure of him,—but my heart could immediately recognise him. That shadowy form of the Superman disappeared after I had been allowed sufficient time to recognise him fully,—and not after I had just a momentary vision of him !

My body and mind were overwhelmed with joy. Oh the Prince among men, you have always been known to be so full of compassion ! Is it out of that compassion that you have been kind enough to appear before me ? Oh Superman, you who stand so high in the matter of renunciation ! May your life of renunciation, may your ideal inspire me in my life's journey ! Be pleased to accept my heart-felt and reverential salutations !

CHAPTER FOUR

During the time of Durgah Pujahs of 1359 B. S., Debabrata came to Bombay to see me on taking a month's leave. I had been taken ill a few days prior thereto. After I felt a bit stronger and better physically, I said to Debabrata, "Now you must arrange to escort me to Vrindaban." Nobody quite approved of the idea of my undertaking such a long journey in view of my shattered health, but in my own mind, I remained steadfast in my resolve. I thought that physically I would never become as fit as before ; on the contrary, I would gradually become more and more listless and inactive owing to old age and infirmity ; I should not put off the programme any further. Besides, Debabrata would accompany me. So why should I worry ? My doctor gave me the necessary permission, and advised me to take with me a particular medicine which he prescribed.

On Aswin 17. 1359 B. S. (corresponding to October 3), I left for Mathura and Vrindaban accompanied by Debabrata. We reached Mathura in the evening of October 4th. With a grateful heart, I remembered the Feet of the Personality of Godhead, and made repeated obeisances to Him.

We stayed at the Agra Hotel by the side of the Jamuna. The Manager of the hotel kindly allotted us the very front room. Strangely enough, I felt stronger beyond expectation both physically and mentally. At the time of my usual meditation and spiritual practices, I offered the following prayer at the Feet of God: "O Indweller of individual Soul, O my Lord, be pleased to fulfil my heart's desire." This is the same Mathura, the land where the Supreme Godhead had condescended to appear, this is the same river Jamuna, flowing by with her holy waters. Whatever changes may have been brought about with the passage of time, the sanctity of this great centre of pilgrimage associated with the memories of the Personality of the Supreme Godhead remains unaffected even to this day. This is that same Mathura, this is the same river Jamuna: I wonder if the Supreme Godhead's Abode is still here! If He is not here, everything is meaningless. My mind, however, told me that He is certainly here. My heart was flooded with an ecstasy of inconceivable joy.

Next morning, after taking my bath, I, accompanied by Debabrata, went to the Temple of Lord Dwarakadhisha at Mathura, and with great devotion and humility bowed down at His lotus Feet. A flood of joy coursed through my body and mind! O Dwarakadhisha, O Krishna, O Thou the Supreme Godhead, verily Thou art still reigning here to fulfil Thy devotees' heartfelt desires!

CHAPTER FIVE

That very day we started in the afternoon for Vrindavan by a taxi-cab. As my health would not permit journey by *tonga*, Dehabrata used to engage taxi-cabs whenever it would be necessary for me to go to and from any particular place. We reached Vrindaban after about an hour and a half. The *Sanyasis* (monks) attached to the Bharat Sevasram Sangha placed at our disposal a very decent room.

This is the same Vrindaban, the land associated with the Supra-mundane sports of Lord Sri Krishna. O Krishna, O the Supreme Godhead, in this great centre of pilgrimage associated with Your joyous Supra-mundane sports, my heart is being saturated with joy remembering You and You alone ! O Lord, it is at Your Feet that my heart, enraptured with the thought of Your divine greatness and with Your divine Name, is making obeisances !

On the day following, after taking our baths early in the morning, Dehabrata and myself, accompanied by a *Panda* (priest at places of pilgrimage who also acts as guide) set out to visit the various Temples.

Our first destination was the Temple of Lord Govindaji. The singing of the Name of Govinda by a congregation of people in a loud voice was going on there. My mind was in a whirl. With great reverence and loving devotion, I bowed down at the lotus Feet of the Supreme Godhead Govindaji. A storm of ecstasy of joy was raging in my heart. With great difficulty, I controlled myself, and arrived at the Temple of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda accompanied by our *Panda*.

While proceeding there, I had purchased a couple of beautiful garlands of *Bel* flowers just on the road leading to the Temple. I had decided that I would offer them at the lotus Feet of the Supreme Godhead and make my obeisances to Him. But no sooner had I stood in close proximity, the *Pujari* took away both the garlands from my hand and put them round the necks of the Figures of the Divine Couple. As soon as I stood up after bowing down with great devotion and humility at the lotus Feet of the Divine Deities, the *Pujari* selected one beautiful garland from amongst the numerous garlands offered at the Feet of the Divine Deities, and handed it to me. After touching my head with the *Nirmalya* (offerings of flowers, *tulsi* leaves etc. made to the Divine Deities) and sipping the water with which the Feet of the Divine Deities had been washed, I put the said garland around my neck. An intoxicating ecstasy of joy, difficult to describe, filled my entire heart !

Thereafter, our *Panda* took us round all the other Temples of Vrindaban and also to *Nidhuban* and *Nikunjaban*. At each and every one of the said Temples, I bowed down with great reverence and humility at the lotus Feet of the Figures of the Divine Couple.

This is the same *Nidhuban* of yore, the same old *Nikunjaban* under the shade of *Tamala* trees ! O Krishna, O the Supreme Godhead, this great centre of pilgrimage used to be resonant with joy once upon a time because of the supra-mundane melodious note of Thy enchanting Flute ! O Krishna, Thou Who art so very dear to my life, O my dearest Supreme Godhead, it is surely a fragment of the same joy which overwhelmed my heart when, with supreme devotion and serving spirit, I made my obeisances at the doors of Thy Temples at Thy lotus Feet !

O Thou the King of the whole Universe, O Thou the Overlord

of kings and emperors, O Krishna Who art so very dear to my life, O the Supreme Godhead, may Thou be graciously pleased to allow this humble and destitute woman an asylum at Thy lotus Feet !

I recalled to my mind Mahaprabhu Caitanya-Deva, and said, 'O Superman, verily Thy command is nothing but Heaven's blessings in my life ! My mind has become saturated with joy ! O Thou the Supreme Servitor of the Supreme God-head, O Thou the great *Sanyasi*, O Thou having supreme Knowledge, be Thou kind enough to light the flame of True Knowledge in the heart of this ignorant woman ! O Lord, may Thou be graciously pleased to accept my deeply reverential and humble obeisances which stem from the depth of my grateful heart !

CHAPTER SIX

After staying at Mathura and Vrindaban for three days, I, along with Debabrata, arrived at Hathwa which was the place where he was employed. His leave was over. I was not yet fully restored to health. Debabrata made every arrangement for all my comforts. After staying there for a month and a half, I decided to go to Muzaffarpore where Jyotirmoy was then residing. Amitabha with his family had also arrived there for a month's sojourn, I reached Muzaffarpore accompanied by Debabrata. After residing with Jyotirmoy at his house for sometime, I, along with Amitabha, arrived at Bombay at Amitabha's residence. My health had already broken down. Surrendering all my thoughts of the future at the lotus Feet

of the Supreme Godhead, I began to pass the remaining days of my life.

The following incident occurred on a day which was towards the second half of the month of Poush, 1360 B. S. At dead of night, I felt that two strong hands of some person were placed on my back and that I was being very forcibly pulled to the front by a strong hand, I shrieked out in intense pain. At that very moment, I had an inner vision of a bright disc of reddish light burning just against the wall to the back of my table. The whole room was illuminated by that light. To my front, at a distance of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ cubits from me, a figure, without any physical body, dressed in white, was standing still. The figure was completely covered from head to foot in very white robe : no part of the figure was exposed to view. Having set alight the bright light, the figure was standing perfectly still,—as if thereby directing me in particular to have a good look at him.

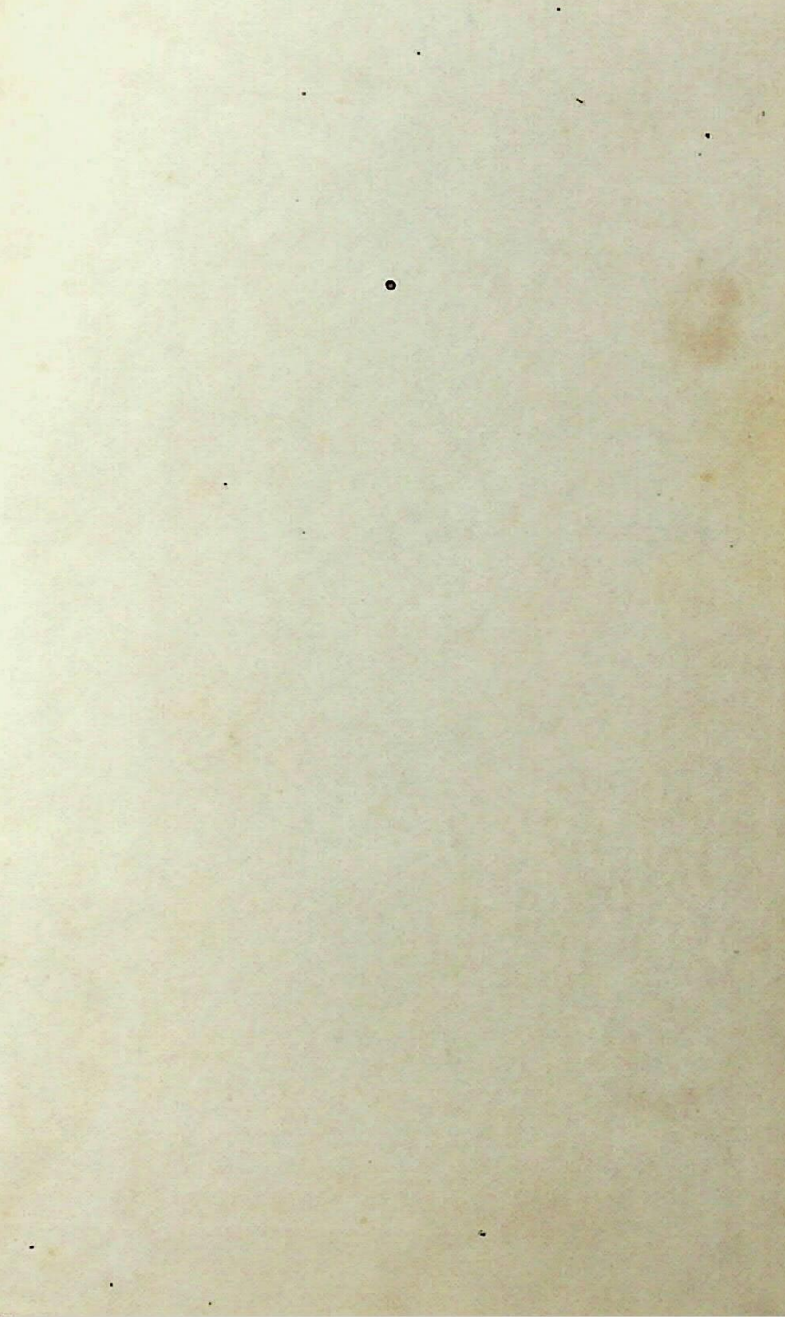
On hearing my shrieks, Amitabha rushed to my room and began to call me "Mother, O mother !" My consciousness returned to me when he called me as 'Mother !' I asked him to see if anybody was standing in the room. He said, "But there is nobody here !"

O Thou without any physical body, Whoever art Thou ! To what destination hast Thou been pulling me with Thy strong hands ? I do not know which inexorable Divinity Thou mayest be. But Thou hast made me realise very well that some calamity soon awaits me !

It was a few months thereafter that I became ill with rheumatism and other ailments. As a result of careful medical treatment and nursing, I was cured of all ailments save rheumatism which attacked me severely. In the infirmity of old age, suffering unbearable agonies on account of rheumatic

pain, I began to pray day and night at the Feet of God as follows : "O God, O my Lord, may Thou in Thy boundless Compassion be graciously pleased to grant me this favour that it may not be my lot to remain confined to bed ! O my Supreme Godhead, be pleased to deliver me and release me from the shackles of this gross world of matter. O Lord, be pleased to forgive me and have mercy on me !"

O Krishna, O Thou who art so very dear to this life of mine, O the Supreme Godhead, be pleased to grant me a shelter at Thy lotus Feet treating me as one who is utterly destitute !



PRESENTED

PRESIDENT

